

Message Text

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S E C R E T JERUSALEM 2260

EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PBOR, MARR, UNSC, IS, LE, XF
SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON: AIME'S VIEWS

1. AT LUNCH AUGUST 14, UNIFIL POLAD AIME GAVE HIS VIEWS ON
SOUTH LEBANON.

2. LAF BATTALION. AIME BELIEVES LEAST DANGEROUS OUTCOME
WOULD BE FOR BATTALION TO REMAIN AT KAWKABA. UNLESS HADDAD
AGREES TO REDEPLOYMENT AT TIBNIN (HIS PRICE WOULD BE
REINSTATEMENT OR SOMETHING ELSE GOL UNABLE OR UNWILLING TO DO),
AIME IS CONVINCED SHIDIAK AND ZAATER WILL CARRY OUT THIER
EXPRESSED THREAT TO FIRE ON UNIT. UNDER PRESENT TENSE
CIRCUMSTANCES, HE BELEIVES THAT THERE IS NO
SUCH THING AS INTRODUCING ANOTHER
MILITARY ELEMENT INTO SOUTH LEBANON AND EXPECTING IT TO REMAIN
OUT OF TROUBLE. THE MERIT OF THIS OPTION, BESIDES AVOID-
ING THE RISK OF FURTHER DEBACLES, IS THAT IT LEAVES LAF UNIT IN
UNIFIL'S AREA OF OPERATIONS AND ALSO ENABLES GOL TO POST-

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PONE ALL ACTION ON HADDAD.

3. ISRAEL'S ROLE. AIME DISPLAYED QUITE A SOPHISTICATED
UNDERSTANDING OF HOW GOI WORKS. HE SAID ATTITUDE OF
HADDAD AND CO. AS DESCRIBED BY BEN GAL AND OTHER IDF OFFICERS
HAD BEEN INDEPENDENTLY CONFIRMED BY UN IN DISCUSSIONS
WITH CHRISTIAN MILITIA LEADERS. GENERAL GAZIT HAD TOLD

AIME, "OUR CONTROL OVER HADDAD IS SIMILAR TO THE INFLUENCE THE U.S. HAS VIS A VIS ISRAEL. WHEN IT COMES TO BASIC SECURITY, THE INFLUENCE IS MARGINAL. WHEN IT COMES TO ALL OTHER MATTERS, THE INFLUENCE IS CONSIDERABLE." AIME ACCEPTS THIS EVALUATION.

4. I TRIED UNSUCCESSFULLY SEVERAL TIMES TO GET AIME TO AGREE THAT THE SITUATIONS IN KAWKABA AND TIBNIN WOULD BE DIFFERENT. HE IS STRONGLY CONVINCED THAT IF THE LAF GOES TO TIBNIN WITHOUT THE AGREEMENT OF HADDAD/SHIDIAK/ZAATER, THAT THE CHRISTIANS WILL CARRY OUT THEIR THREAT TO OPEN FIRE.

5. AIME SAID HE HAD HEARD A RUMOR THAT AS SOON AS LAF BATTALION IS OUT OF ARTILLERY RANGE OF MARJAYOUN, GOL WILL COURT MARTIAL HADDAD IN ABSENTIA. AIME THOUGHT THIS WOULD BE SUICIDAL AS FAR AS ANY HOPE OF GETTING A SYMBOLIC LAF PRESENCE ANYWHERE IN THE SOUTH.

AIME WAS DISTRESSED AT PROSPECT SYRIA MIGHT ESCORT LAF AS FAR AS AKIYA BRIDGE. THIS WOULD ONLY CONFIRM CHRISTIAN THEORY OF GOL-SYRIAN PLOT TO ELIMINATE ENCLAVES. AKAIME SAYS HE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED IF GOL HAD IN FACT MADE A DEAL WITH SYRIA RE HADDAD IN CONNECTION WITH MOVE SOUTH AND BEIRUT SITUATION.)

6. PLO. WHEN AIME RECENTLY ASKED QADDOUMI IF PLO
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WOULD COOPERATE IN REDEPLOYMENT VIA NABATIYA AND AKIYA BRIDGE, LATTER CALLED ARAFAT. CHAIRMAN HAD REPLIED PLO WOULD COOPERATE WHEN HADDAD TAKEN CARE OF. IN PLO EYES, HADDAD WAS A TRAITOR FROM THE MOMENT WHEN GENERAL BEN GUR ANNOUNCED HADDAD'S FORCES WERE COOPERATING WITH IDF. HE WOULD HAVE TO PAY FOR HIS ACTIONS, IF NOT KNOW, THEN EVENTUALLY.

7. AIME REPORTS ERSKINE'S MEETING WITH GENERAL BEN GAL WILL TAKE PLACE IN NAZARETH AUGUST 15. HE HAS ALSO SPOKEN WITH URQUHART WHO WAS MEETING WITH TUENI. TUENI REPORTEDLY WILL RETURN TO BEIRUT FOR MEETINGS AUGUST 16.

8. COMMENT: THIS CONVERSATION REINFORCES PREVIOUS IMPRESSION THAT PART OF GOL'S HESITANCY MAY BE RELATED TO ADVICE KHOURY HAS BEEN GETTING FROM UNIFIL. IN EVENT GOL DECIDES FOR ONE OF THE OPTIONS OUTLINED IN TEL AVIV 10332, IT WOULD SEEM INIFIL WILL NEED A GREAT DEAL OF HAND HOLDING BY URQUHART. PLEASE PROTECT AIME'S CONFIDENCE.

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